

Major Group for Children and Youth

Statement for Bureau Meeting, Informal-Informals (January 27, 2012)

On behalf of the Major Group for Children and Youth, we want to emphasize the *profound* importance of an ambitious Rio+20 process with tangible results to deliver The Future We Want. Sustainable development should create just and equal societies based on human rights and to achieve this must include children and youth as key stakeholders. Especially as we ultimately face the long-term consequences of current decisions.

Engaging children and youth in political processes improves policy formulation, evaluation, and implementation. We support and encourage the continued strengthening of paragraph 21 that has been offered by some Member States. However, access to information and opportunities for children and youth participation continue to be very limited at national, regional and international levels. We agree with the Member States that stress that the outcome of Rio+20 must inspire individuals and groups, while fostering intergenerational solidarity. We seek your support to improve inclusion of youth delegates, which will strengthen the commitment of Member States to the values of the Rio Declaration, particularly principles 10 and 21, as well as intergenerational equity and equal participation.

We ask the Bureau to support the Official Youth Delegates Programme by inviting Member States to include youth delegates in their Rio+20 delegations. Official youth delegates serve as important liaisons with the children and youth of their countries, inspiring and encouraging young people to participate more actively at a grassroots level in the implementation of sustainable development policies. The Major Group for Children and Youth is dedicated to achieving the realities of this goal by promoting an official youth delegates programme.

In addition to our efforts of empowerment, the Major Group for Children and Youth is organizing a Youth Blast conference in the lead up to Rio+20. We invite support for our Youth Blast which aims to empower children and youth. All young people, as well as interested individuals and organisations are welcome to attend. We believe this is an opportunity for the young to be engaged in the creation of our shared sustainable future, and in its implementation.

Child and Youth participation is a valuable and key element to achieving and implementing any sustainable development agreement. Together, we can secure our future - through strong actions, strong collaboration and strong commitments.

Thank you.